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ABSTRACT

The following descriptive characteristics form the groundwork for a working definition of the concept of community-based education: (1) access to all; (2) continuous service to the learner throughout his life; (3) values and priorities based on the needs of the people; (4) recognition of the market; (5) flexibility; and (6) performance orientation. Several prominent authorities' views of community-based education are noted; the idea of the college and the community as partners in the educational endeavor is the common emphasis of all their views. Extrapolating from other definitions, the author defines community-based education as an educational system which uses the community as its base--its organizational center, its creative source, its chief constituent, its underlying concept, and its supporting foundation. The community-based college must look outward toward the learner and the community as it develops goals and objectives, hence there must be room for innovation, flexibility in governance, and a faculty with a commitment to serving the community. Since the ability to analyze the community and its needs are central to this entire concept, several different approaches to needs assessment are noted. A checklist is provided to determine to what extent a particular college or program is community-based. (Author/AH)

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Community-Based Educational Experiences for Community Colleges

by

Dr. James F. Gollattscheck

An Address Delivered at the 3rd Annual
New Horizons in Community College
Occupational-Technical Education Conference

Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
Blacksburg, Virginia
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Dr. Andrew, Dr. Hoerner, ladies and gentlemen of the conference, good morning. I bring you greetings from the other great state community college system. I must, however, admit that after the welcome I received last night to the great Commonwealth of Virginia, I feel I should apologize for coming from just a state.

I am particularly honored to have been asked to come to the conference and talk to a group of Virginia community college people about community-based education because you have here in the Commonwealth some of the finest examples of community-based education in the nation.

Last night we heard from Al Riendeau about several serious problems facing our nation, and in turn our states and our communities. Al talked about inflation, unemployment, and the energy crisis. I should like to begin my remarks by asserting that the major concern of the community college ought to be to assist their communities face and solve these and other problems on the local level. That would be the sum and substance of community-based education. I was particularly pleased to hear in Dr. Riendeau's remarks that when asked about the community

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college's ability to respond to the energy crisis, Dr. Gleazer indicated that we could. I would hope that such responses are what we are all about.

I have been asked to talk to you today about community-based educational experiences for community colleges. I suppose this title would bother many community college people who would ask the somewhat logical question, "What other kind of experiences do community colleges have?". There are, however, many concepts of the community college, of which the community-based community college is only one—the most recent and probably the rarest. A community college may be a college developed for the community—a college located on a campus on the edge of town providing an educational program for the community. This is a community college. It may be excellent in many ways. It may not be a community-based college. Another concept is that of the college in the community—a college that has taken its program for the community to various locations in the community. This too is a community college. It may or may not be a community-based community college even though it may have a very wide spread off-campus program.

Toward a Definition of Community-Based Education

A great deal of thought has been and is being given to the development of a definition of community-based education. I have just returned, as some of you have, from the annual conference of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges in Seattle. The COMBASE consortium, of which my college and two Virginia community colleges are members, sponsored a forum entitled, "Toward a Definition of Community-Based Education: A Symposium." One very interesting aspect of this forum is that it will be continued. The entire program was taped

and the participants in the forum will have an opportunity to respond to a synthesis of the definitions given at the meeting. Hopefully, the result will be an effective working definition of community-based education.

At this point in time one must begin any discussion of community-based education by establishing what he means by community-based education. I think the title of the forum at the AACJC convention was appropriate. At the present time we are working toward a definition of community-based. We do not yet know the full potential of community-based education and therefore cannot give a complete definition. One caution given at the Seattle meeting was that we must not try to develop a final definition since the concept itself must be vital and changing.

Several individuals and colleges have developed working definitions of the concept. Ed Gleazer, in his very excellent precursory article "What Now for the Community Colleges?", gave six characteristics of community-based education. While I realize that characteristics describe rather than define, it is well to begin with such a description. Dr. Gleazer's first descriptive characteristic was that there must be "access to all." "There are a multitude of entry points, both in time and place," he stated. "The college adapts its procedures to meet the convenience and needs of its clients...unjustified rigidities of calendar, campus, and courses would have to go." The second of Dr. Gleazer's descriptive characteristics is that there must be "a sense of continuing collegiality." Dr. Gleazer goes on to say that "not for a moment is it assumed that the college and the citizen have only one short period of association. The college is there to be used the way the public library is used, when there is a need and an interest...I have called

Community colleges educational resource centers for the community and more and more consumers are demanding that the structures and processes of education be arranged upon the assumption that persons of any age are to be served." At the COMBASE forum in Seattle, Dr. Gleazer described the community-based community college as an "educational utility"—a unique and intriguing concept when one thinks of it as a necessary community service to be used when and where needed.

Dr. Gleazer's third characteristic is that "the college seeks ways to destroy the hierarchy of values now often institutionalized of vocational technical, academic, developmental and recurrent programs. People's needs and plans for self-development are the basis of approach." The fourth descriptive characteristic is that "there is structural recognition of the market." Dr. Gleazer indicates further in his remarks that the college must be "market-oriented." Throughout the college there should be concern about "what new products can we market in response to identified community needs." Dr. Gleazer specifies as another characteristic that the college must be flexible enough to respond quickly to community needs. He states that "the quality of flexibility will have implications for funding patterns, accreditation procedures, and college governance." The last descriptive characteristic is that "the quality of flexibility further suggests the need for performance criteria. Students begin their association with the institution from where they are and the starting points may vary widely. It is difficult to conceive of the traditional, conventional academic model achieving success with the broad heterogeneity of population to be served by the community-based post secondary institution. There is a need for a result-oriented system which will involve measures of performance with diagnosis of student need, measurement of student progress, and...evaluation

of teacher performance in terms of student achievement." Certainly the ground work for a definition of community-based education is laid in these six descriptive characteristics.

1. Access to all
2. Continuous service to the learner throughout his life
3. Values and priorities based on the needs of people
4. Market recognition
5. Flexibility
6. Performance orientation

Dr. Ervin Harlacher, Chancellor of the Metropolitan Community Colleges in Kansas City, is an acknowledged leader in community-based educational programs. From 1963 to 1966, Dr. Harlacher pioneered community service programs at Cerritos and Foothill Colleges in California. His experience there and at other innovative community colleges such as Oakland Community College in Michigan and as the founding president of Brookdale Community College in New Jersey sharpened his concepts and he developed each time a fuller comprehension of community-based education. His book, The Community Dimension of the Community College, published in 1969, is still the standard text in the field. Dr. Harlahcer talks now about the "community renewal college." A college that "takes a larger view of the educational process—providing beside formalized learning experiences, those of an informal nature that contribute to the individuals acquisition of new or expanded knowledge and his productive use of what he has learned. A community renewal college, Dr. Harlacher has stated, "must be dedicated to the proposition that human renewal, the up-grading of every citizen in the community, is its primary

and over-riding purpose."

Cunder Myron, Dean of Academic Affairs at Rockland Community College and President-Elect of the National Council on Community Services for Community and Junior Colleges, referred to community-based education when he said that he "envisions a future in which the college is the instrumentality that weaves the educational fabric of the community into a whole. In this vision of the future, many life experiences will be seen as educative: work, personal or informal study, military or industrial training, etc.; the students of this college will include the working adult who mixes in new ways work and study; the full time students who is motivated to mix learning and direct service to his community; the older person who wishes to reenter the educational sphere for personal enrichment or vocational upgrading."

The concept of the community college working with and through other community agencies to effect a community-based educational program is, I think, very important. We are not the only educational agency in the community. Each of you would be astounded at the number of organizations and agencies in your community at least partially devoted to commmunity education. With the limited resources of the college, it is foolish not to plug into the ongoing momentum of these agencies when and where our goals coincide.

My best example of this arrangement is the relationship between Valencia and the Council for Continuing Education for Women. Our relationship began many years ago when we began to cooperate with the volunteer agency in offering jointly-sponsored educational programs. The Council's major objectives are the counseling and education of women in the community. Over a period of six years our relation-

ship grew closer until last year we legally merged. A very important aspect of the merger was that the Council retained its identity and thereby its image as a community organization. They have gained housing, administrative assistance, and our help with a federal grant. The college has gained a valuable community resource—a group that knows the needs of women in the community, a group of dedicated volunteer workers, and a communication link with the community.

This is just one example of many types of relationships a community-based institution may establish with agencies and organizations in the community. One major role the college can play is to coordinate the many educational forces at work in the community so that each can achieve maximum effectiveness with minimum resources.

At Valencia Community College we have developed the concept of an educational cooperative as a convenient construct for developing our approach to community-based education. The concept of a cooperative offers insights as to how a community college may work together with the community to develop a community-based educational program. The rational for establishing a community college is the same as for a business cooperative. Organizations, groups, and individuals within the community pool their resources (taxes), establish a framework, and provide an organization to meet the needs they could not meet alone. The community college is then charged with serving the needs of the community (the members of its cooperative), in return for their support.

A cooperative provides as many kinds of services as its members wish and

as many as the cooperative is capable of handling or recognizes as feasible at any one time. Thus some individuals or groups within the college cooperative may desire only transfer programs or career education courses for credit. Some may wish non-credit continuing education courses. Some may see a need for special services only after the community college has served as a catalyst, making the community aware of a particular need. Some will want to draw extensively on the college's facilities, leadership, and resources for support; others may have the necessary facilities, resources, and personnel to meet their needs but are lacking the leadership, expertise, and organization for planning and implementing a program.

Thus the group or organization from the community and the community college enter into a cooperative arrangement in which the community college assists the group in meeting its own needs. This is a joint venture in which the community college assumes any role deemed most appropriate by mutual agreement between the community organization and the college.

Looking over these several attempts to develop working definitions of community-based education, what common thread can we find? I think it is that all have implied a new or different type of relationship between the community and the college—a relationship in which the college and the community are partners in the educational endeavor. The dictionary definitions of the word base give some insight into what it might mean to be community-based. In one sense a base is "the supporting layer or foundation." In another sense a base is "the fundamental principle or underlying concept of a system." Another definition of base is "a

center of organization, supply, or activity—a headquarters."

Using a synthesis of these definitions, one might define community-based education as an educational system which uses the community as its base—its organizational center, its creative source, its chief constituent, its underlying concept, and its supporting foundation. In such a system the community becomes the source of the objectives of the institution, the determiner of its direction, and the needs of students become the ultimate criteria against which the success of the institution is measured. Actually what we call community-based education is really student-based education. In a community college, however, our potential students are the entire community. Student-based education, therefore, equals community-based education.

This, I think, is the real answer to the frequently asked question, "What is different between community-based education and what we have been doing?". The answer may be no difference at all or a great deal of difference depending upon the extent to which your programs and activities have been based on the real needs of your community of potential students.

In the remainder of my time here this morning I should like to touch on several areas of concern to most colleges as they attempt to become more community-based—the organization of the institution, community analysis, and the educational programs of the college.

The Organization of the Community-Based College

The college that would be community-based has unique organizational

problems. The traditional college is inward looking as it seeks its goals, objectives, and sense of direction and the organization has generally been so designed. The traditional organizational pattern of departments based on academic disciplines, committee structures within the college, and the traditional chain of command within the governance structure have all contributed to the preservation of a system of education based on objectives set by the institution, programs and degrees developed and protected by academicians, methods based more on concern for "how to teach" than on "how learners learn" and standards established not on what someone needs to know or be able to do but on mastery of what the institution feels needs to be taught. In short, most of the factors which determine the educational program of the college come from within the college.

The community-based college must look outward toward the learner and toward the community as it develops its goals, objectives, and direction. The organization of the community-based college must reflect this orientation and facilitate the mission of the institution.

The principles and objectives of community-based education may be met through a wide variety of organizational patterns. I, for one, do not believe that there is any "best way" to organize a college to achieve a particular mission. There are too many variables involved—for example, the management style of the chief executive, the relationship between governing boards and chief executives, legal limitations, the particular skills and talents of faculty and staff, and last, but certainly not least, the nature of the community. The history and past experiences of the institution will also determine, to a great extent, what will

work for each institution. I also believe that every administrative pattern has strengths and weaknesses. The best one can do is to be aware of them. One can then capitalize on the strengths and help shore-up or compensate for weaknesses in the organizational structure.

The organizational patterns of most community-based community colleges would fall into one of two general categories. First, the totally integrated approach in which all or many units of the college have responsibility for all or many of the college missions; and second, the approach in which separate units at varying levels are created to accomplish specific college missions. An example of the first category would be a college where each campus or each department within a campus has responsibility for all of the various activities of the college, such as transfer programs, career education, and community services. An example of the second category is where a separate campus or unit of a campus is created for specific missions or purposes—for example, a campus or department created to provide community services. As I cautioned earlier, both patterns have advantages and disadvantages. The integrated approach may fail to focus proper attention on specific functions. When a department within a campus or college is responsible for all parts of the college mission, community services and community-based education may not receive appropriate attention because of the demands of the campus. A disadvantage of the organizational pattern which creates separate units is that various functions may become isolated when a separate campus or department is created for community services. The rest of the college may assume that it has no responsibility for the needs of the community.

While there is no fool-proof recipe for organizing a college for community-based education, there are unique problems which must be taken into consideration as a college looks at its organization and its effectiveness in facilitating community-based education.

1. A campus-based program has less difficulty gathering the information it needs to develop its objectives and programs. Faculty generally let their wishes be known. Campus students have more access to the decision-makers of the college. The community, at least in the beginning, doesn't usually come to the college with its needs and requests. The college must seek them out. The organization must provide for continuous community input and provide mechanisms for assimilating this flow of data from the community into the college planning. The organization of the college must ensure an active and continuous analysis of the community and for continuous two-way communication with the community.

2. The organization must provide for flexibility in planning. Community needs are more shifting and transitory than traditional objectives. The college that would be community-based must have the ability to change and modify direction more readily than the traditional college.

3. The organization must provide for faculty development and involvement in community education. We must realize that the majority of college faculties are oriented toward

traditional higher education and may have difficulty adapting to the wide range of new students to be served by the community-based institution.

4. The organization must provide for innovative staffing. The needs of non-traditional students will require non-traditional approaches to staffing—the use of the community instructor, community volunteers, and community counselors.

5. The organization of the community-based college must provide for non-traditional, innovative approaches to learning. The college must realize that the community students will bring with them wide ranging levels and types of experiences. The institution must be willing to recognize and accept these experiences as valid learning.

6. The organization must provide for evaluation of the community-based effort. This is perhaps the most difficult. Traditional education has been easier to evaluate because goals have come from within the college. When goals and objectives come from outside the college, evaluation is not as easy to build into the structure.

7. The organization is, in one sense, the visible structure of the community college. The organization should, therefore, enhance the image and the effectiveness of the college as a community-based institution.

Community Analysis

Perhaps no concern of the community-based college is more important than community analysis. If, in fact, the community is to be the source of the direction and objectives of the college, then the college must have complete, recent and accurate information about the community. I have used the term analysis of the community rather than needs assessment. Needs assessment implies a study of what the community lacks. Community analysis, on the other hand, includes both needs and resources in the community.

Community analysis may take many forms and may range from very simple activities to highly sophisticated systems. Hans Spiegal, speaking at the 1974 Assembly of the American Association of Community and Junior Colleges, cautioned that "There are so many aspects of a community to be researched that the big danger in studying the community is that it could result in a huge mountain of jumbled and useless date."

Among the critical areas about which information must be gathered in order for a college to be community-based would be the following:

1. Who is the community? What are their basic characteristics?
2. What is the structure of the community—the substructures?
3. What are the mechanisms of communication in the community?
4. What visible sub-communities exist? What are the needs of these constituencies?
5. What are the needs of businesses?
6. Are there overriding economic needs of the total community or specific areas within the community?

7. What are the needs for community renewal or development?

8. What are the needs of individual groups in the community?

9. What are the strengths and resources in the community?

10. What agencies have educational goals and objectives? What organizations dedicated to community improvement exist?

11. What facilities and services are available in the community?

How do we go about analyzing the community? The answer again is that procedures may range from simple approaches to extremely sophisticated and complex computerized systems. The important factor is that the information be continuous and accurate. What you need to know about your community is determined to a great extent by your goals and objectives. In one sense, advisory committees provide for community analysis. Simple demographic data provide information about the community. Looking at a more sophisticated technique, let me describe the results of a current project, The Central Florida Community College Needs Assessment Consortium.

Included in the mission statement or list of purposes for almost any comprehensive community college is a commitment to technical programs which qualify a graduate for immediate employment. The problems begin when faculty and staff try to identify those programs which would best meet the occupational needs of the area. Institutions have traditionally depended on employer questionnaires to determine whether a proposed program is needed. This method is weak because the employer makes no commitment when he indicates he would hire ten graduates of a particular program. A favorable response to such question-

naires has often encouraged colleges to invest a great deal of time and money in programs which do not attract students.

In order to develop a more valid indicator of occupational needs, Valencia and six other Florida two-year institutions formed the Central Florida Community Colleges Consortium in July of 1972. The consortium's first major project was the development of a Needs Assessment Model which would enable a community college to examine its service area's job market as it affects technical programs. The result of this three-year project is a computerized model which can be used to pinpoint technical programs which might be implemented by the college.

The Needs Assessment Model is based on data obtained from the state employment service. The model is not feasible in a state which does not have its employment data computerized; however, all states should implement computerized systems within the next three or four years. I have checked and found that the Commonwealth of Virginia does have computerized employment data.

Employment service data was selected because it represents approximately forty percent of the available jobs in the area. This percentage should increase because more employers are listing their positions with the local employment office due to the recent EAEO rulings. The job data bank is computerized; consequently, the employer has access to a permanent record that he did advertise his job openings. Professional positions such as doctors, lawyers, etc. are seldom listed with the public employment service, but community colleges are not training people for these professions. The consortium's research has shown that occupations which fit within the community college's mission are usually listed.

The first step in the process is to request the monthly computer tape from the State Department of Commerce. This tape includes all of the job openings listed with the local employment office. The tape is then edited to obtain the job openings for the college's service area. The edited tape contains over 8,000 characters of information for each job requested that is submitted (i.e., the type of job available; experience required; pay range; education or learning competencies required; etc.). The tape is run through a computer program to obtain the number of openings in a particular occupation, the number of jobs filled, and the net jobs remaining open. This data can be ranked to provide a list of the employment areas which have numerous unfilled jobs. The computer program, in addition to displaying overall occupational needs of an area, can be developed to select only those positions which meet college defined criteria. For example, the program might select positions which have an hourly pay rate of $3.00 or above. But to establish need, variables other than salary must be considered. The education or learning competencies required; the salary range; the experience required; and the length of time the jobs remain open are the variables selected for the Needs Assessment Model. Each college has the option of specifying what the cut-off points for each of these variables will be. A college in a rural area may decide that an hourly pay rate of $2.50 may be worth consideration, while a college in an industrial area might want to make $4.00 an hour the cut-off point.

The data is weighted and displayed in charts to give a listing of all occupations which fall within the ranges set by the college. This data can then be compared with the college's program offerings to determine if the college is meeting the

employment needs of the community. The data may reveal areas in which the college might want to institute new courses or an entire program. Although all of the available jobs in a community are not listed in the job bank data, the results of the model are a good indicator of employment trends in an area.

The Needs Assessment Model is relatively simple to implement. The model utilizes a "canned computer program" which is readily available, and schools which do not have access to a fairly large computer can contract with a university for computer time. A person can learn to use the listings and charts with only a few hours of instruction, and the model is available to anyone who would like to implement it. The model is not the solution to all of the problems encountered in technical programs, but it is one tool which can be used to help community colleges better meet the needs of its community.

Community-Based Educational Programs

What are the programs and curricula of the community-based college? Classified in broad categories, they would be transfer, occupational, and community services. I know the immediate reaction running through each of your minds is "What is he talking about? These are the three traditional missions of the community college." And you are absolutely correct. Keep in mind, for a moment, that these are broad categories of programs. They do not imply objectives, focus, delivery systems, or clients and it is in these areas, I submit, that a college program is or is not community-based. There has been an assumption that the community service aspect of community college education has been the most community-based because of work with the community. Vocational-technical

education has been assumed to run a close second because of the use of community advisory committees and close work with community industry. I would submit that this is not necessarily true. Each program and activity of the college must be measured against the definitions and descriptive characteristics of community-based education. No part of the college program is in and of itself community-based.

I should like to close my remarks with a check list against which we can look at our colleges, programs, and activities and determine the extent to which they are community-based. The list is certainly not exhaustive and I would probably add to it at each reading.

1. Does the college, program, or activity exist because of a realistic need in the community or just because other colleges have it or because "colleges have always had it"?
2. Are there mechanics for altering or modifying the college, program, or activity as community needs change?
3. To what degree do a wide variety of people have access to the college, program, or activity?
4. May students enter and leave the college, program, or activity at various times depending upon need and convenience?
5. Does the college, program, or activity operate in locations convenient to the student?
6. Is the college, program, or activity based on real needs of learners rather than on requirements for courses or degrees?

7. Does the college, program, or activity address itself to the needs of people at various times in their lives?

8. Is the college, program, or activity flexible enough to start, stop, and change directions as needs change?

9. May students begin at various points in the college, program, or activity depending upon their needs and abilities?

10. Does the college, program, or activity recognize and give credit for past experience?

11. Does the college, program, or activity recognize the need for continuous human and community renewal?

12. Does the college, program, or activity provide for information services to assist students in selecting educational experiences and attracting potential students to the experiences?

13. Does the college, program, or activity give consideration to the differing learning styles of students?

14. Does the college, program, or activity work for, in, and through other organizations and agencies in the community?

15. Is the college, program, or activity evaluated in terms of community needs?

16. Does the college, program, or activity address itself to a wide range of human needs?

I should like to close my remarks with a quotation from one of the truly great thinkers and writers of our time—Dr. Margaret Mead. Dr. Mead calls for a

redefinition of education in the following remarks.

> When we look realistically at today's world and become aware of what the actual problems of learning are, our conception of education changes radically. Although the educational system remains basically unchanged, we are no longer dealing primarily with the vertical transmission of the tried and true by the old, mature, and experienced teacher to the young, immature, and inexperienced pupil in the classroom.
>
> This was the system of education developed in a stable, slowly changing culture. By itself, vertical transmission of knowledge no longer adequately serves the purposes of education in a world of rapid change.
>
> What is needed and what we are already moving toward in the inclusion of another whole dimension of learning: the lateral transmission, to every sentient member of society, of what has just been discovered, invented, created, manufactured or marketed....
>
> The whole teaching and learning continuum, once tied in an orderly and productive way to the passing of generations and the growth of the child into a man, has exploded in our faces.
>
> This, then, is what we call the lateral transmission of knowledge. It is not an outpouring of knowledge from the "wise old teacher" into the minds of young pupils, as in vertical transmission. Rather, it is a sharing of knowledge by the informed with the uninformed, whatever their ages. The primary prerequisite for the learner is the desire to know.

Upon first reading or hearing, these remarks sound very timely and well-stated. What is really remarkable, however, is that Dr. Mead made these comments over fifteen years ago. I can think of no better definition of community-based education than the lateral transmission of needed knowledge and skills to every sentient member of society—lateral meaning educator to citizen, citizen to educator, citizen to citizen, etc. This is the manner in which we as true community-based colleges can and will help solve the critical problems facing

our communities and, in fact, achieve individual and community renewal.

Thank you for your kind attention.

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